

XV. *A Description of the Great Black Wasp, from Pennsylvania, as communicated from Mr. John Bartram to Mr. Peter Collinson, F. R. S.*

Read Dec. 21. 1749. **S**OME Time ago, some Gentlemen

present at a Meeting of the Royal Society *, were pleased to give a favourable Reception to an Account of a particular Species of small Black Wasp, that fabricated its Nest with Clay, in it deposited an Egg, and then stuffed it full of Spiders for the Maggot to feed on, *Transf.* No. 476.

This that I now have the Pleasure to lay before you, has something analogous in its Nature, but is a much larger Insect, and rarely met with in the Province of *Pennsylvania*. The following Observations I have collected from my ingenious Friend *John Bartram's* Letters.

You will see by the Specimen (TAB. IV. *Fig.* 20.), the Size of this *Great Black Wasp*; it supplies itself with Food, by roving about the Meadows, catching Grasshoppers, and other Insects; on these it feeds, and not on Fruits, as other Wasps do.

But what is more remarkable, is the Method of making their Nests, and providing for their young.

With great Pains and Industry they scratch an horizontal Hole, near an Inch Diameter, and a Foot long, in the steep Side of a Bank of loamy Earth; then away the Wasp flies, and catches a large
Green

* April 25 1745.

Green Grasshopper, and lodges it in the farther End of her Nest; then she lays an Egg, and then goes and catches two more, and deposits them with the other, then plaisters up the Hole. The Egg soon produces a Maggot. These Grasshoppers, by marvellous Instinct, are provided for its Food, until it changes into its Nymph State, in which it lies for a certain Period, and then eats its Way out, and flies away, seeking its Mate.

But what may deserve our farther Attention, is the wonderful Sagacity of this Creature, not only in catching these large Grasshoppers (*See* TAB. IV. *Fig.* 21.), which are very like ours, and are very strong and nimble, as most may have observed that take them up: But their peculiar Skill is to be admired in disabling them, either by Bite or Sting, so as not to kill them; for then they would soon putrify, and be unfit for Nourishment. Life sufficient is left to preserve them for the time the Maggot is to feed on them.

The three Grasshoppers in the Glass-Case were all taken alive out of one Nest; but they had lost their Agility: Being secured in a Cavity in the Earth, may be a Means to keep them living: When exposed to the Air, they died in a Day or two.

The Sting of this Wasp is painful, but does not swell like others.

Fig. II. p. 262.

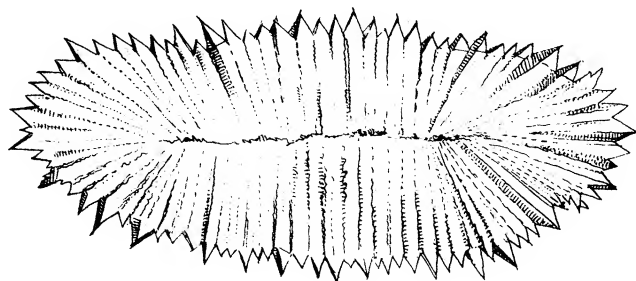


Fig. 1. p. 258.



Fig. 12. p. 263.

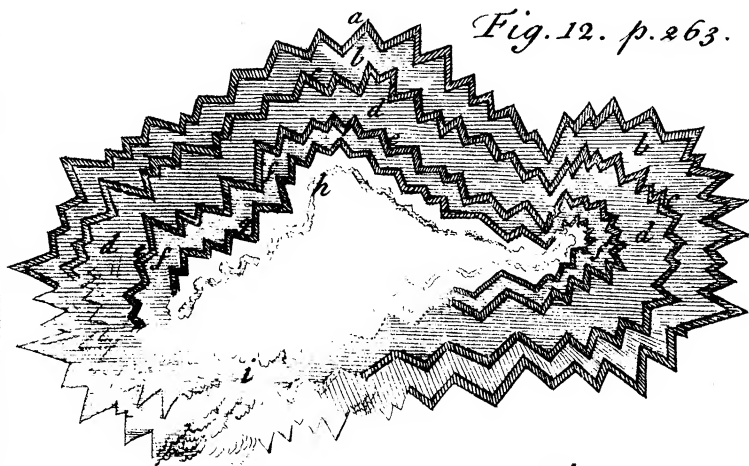


Fig. 6. p. 261.

Fig. 7. p. 261.

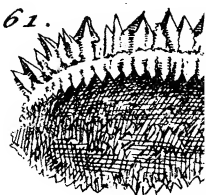


Fig. 14. p. 263.



Fig. 13. p. 263.

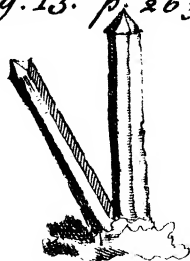


Fig. 15. p. 263.



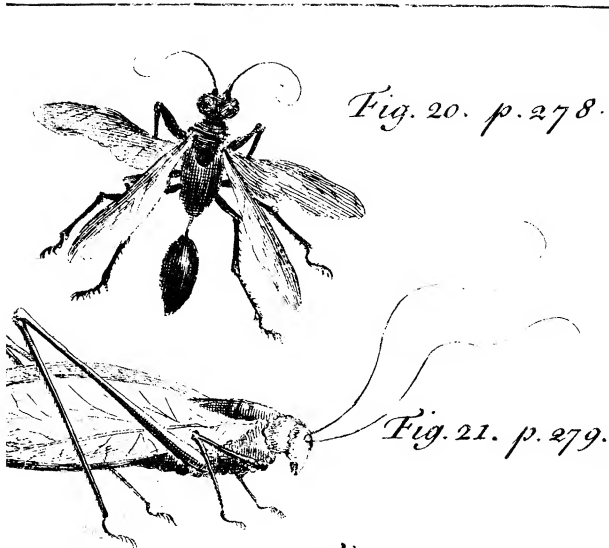


Fig. 20. p. 278.

Fig. 21. p. 279.

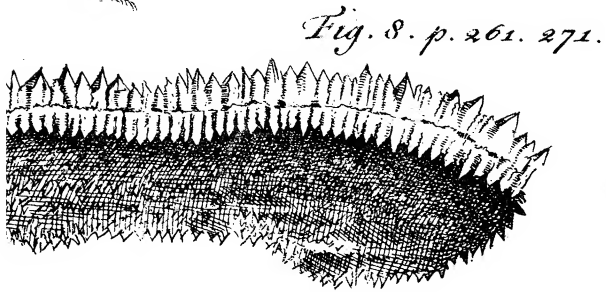


Fig. 8. p. 261. 271.



Fig. 9. p. 262.



Fig. 10. p. 262.

Fig. 1. p. 1811



Fig. 2. p. 1811



Fig. 3. p. 1811



Fig. 4. p. 1811



Fig. 5. p. 1811



Fig. 6. p. 1811



Fig. 7. p. 1811



Fig. 8. p. 1811



Fig. 9. p. 1811



Fig. 10. p. 1811



Fig. 11. p. 1811

